Dr. David Yale (1540–1626)

Origin and Family

Born c. 1540. Died 1626, age 86.

Father: John Yale (Wynn) (c. 1525–c. 1577)
Mother: Agnes Lloyd, daughter of John Lloyd of Denbigh
Spouse: Frances Lloyd, daughter of Dr. John Lloyd, D.C.L.

Children:[1]

1. Thomas Yale (1586–1619)
2. George Yale
3. David Yale
4. John Yale
5. Hugh Yale
6. Richard Yale
7. Simon Yale
8. Samuel Yale
9. Ellen Yale
10. Katherine Yale
11. Frances Yale
12. Devereux Yale
13. Mrs. _____ Elyse
14. Mrs. _____ Reynolds

There is some confusion among historical documents as to the parentage of Dr. David Yale. Most sources suggest he was the illegitimate son of John Yale. “There is no doubt that he was a natural son of John Yale (Wyn, or Wynne), heir of Plas-yn-Yale, by one Agnes Lloyd, daughter of John Lloyd. This illegitimacy is confirmed by an entry in a manuscript in the National Library of Wales (MS. 7008 page 151-2 under Plas-yn-Ial). This is repeated on page 352 of Dwnn’s “Heraldic Visitations of Wales Between 1586 and 1613”, saying that “David Ial Doctor of Law was a natural son of John Wynn and Agnes verch John Lloyd.”[3] However, some historians believe David’s father was actually John’s younger brother Thomas. See Thomas Yale, LL.D. for more information.

David Yale was fortunate to have a benefactor in his uncle Thomas Yale, who was brother to John Yale and Dean of the Arches, Chancellor of Bangor and Chancellor to the Archbishop of Canterbury. As a graduate of Queens’ College in Cambridge, Thomas helped David attend the same school in 1555; there “he received three degrees, B.A. 1563-64, M.A. 1567, and LL.D. 1579, and became a fellow of Queens’ College, 1565-81, a Proctor 1575-76, and was admitted an Advocate 3 Feb 1581/2”.[3] In 1578, he succeeded his uncle Thomas as prebendary of Y Faenol in St. Asaph Cathedral.

The Welsh historian Mr. Alfred Neobard Palmer pays the following tribute to Dr. David Yale: “a man, famous in himself, and famous in his connections and descendants, not the least of whom was Elihu Yale, the founder of Yale College in New England.”[2]

In 1585, Dr. David Yale married Frances Lloyd, daughter of John Lloyd ap David Lloyd of Cevn Amwlch, in Lleyn, Carnarvonshire, who was of the family of Griffiths of Cevn Amwlch. Dr. John

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Lloyd, D.C.L., father of Frances Lloyd-Yale, was for forty years an advocate in the Consistory Court of Canterbury and resided at Hartshorne, Derbyshire.[1]

Occupation and Property

“He was rector of Llandegla (1564–1573), prebendary of Y Faenol in St. Asaph Cathedral (1578–1624), prebendary of Chester from 1582, Chancellor of Chester (1587–1624), Justice of the Peace (1601–1620) "and of the Quorum" for the County of Chester (1603).”[1] With Edmund Meyrick he administered the see of Bangor in the vacancy between the episcopates of Nicholas Robinson (q.v.) and Hugh Bellot in 1585.[4]

From Notitia Cestriensis[5]: "He was a civil lawyer. He became vicar of High Ottley in Staffordshire in 1573. His legal career appears to commence with his uncle's death in 1577, for he succeeded him to the Faenol prebend at St. Asaph and was admitted as an advocate to the court of Arches on 19 October 1579, the same year that he took the degree of LL.D. He became a full member of Doctors' Commons on 3 February 1582, the year in which he was appointed a prebendary of Chester. In 1583 he was named rector of Llandyrnog in Denbighshire. He was chancellor of Chester diocese between 1587 and 1608, and in 1599 was appointed commissioner of ecclesiastical causes for York province.”[5] David Yale was only an occasional resident in London as the primary focus of his activities kept him in Denbighshire and Cheshire.

In 1607, Dr. Yale was appointed Vicar General to George Lloyd, Bishop of Chester. Through this close professional relationship, his son Thomas met the Bishop's daughter, Anne Lloyd, and they married c. 1612.

The positions Dr. David Yale held made him wealthy, especially Chancellor of Chester, one of the highest paid positions in Cheshire at the time.[8]

Dr. Yale prospered in turbulent times. The Roman Catholic Church was being replaced by the Protestant Church of England, and during Dr. Yale’s lifetime many “heretics” were executed by fire, among them bishops and prominent Welshmen.[9] In Wales, up to 25% of the land was owned by the church, and most of it was leased to tenants that paid annually for its use as farmland. As prebendary of Chester and elsewhere, Dr. Yale received a portion of the lease income, as well as the income from the many properties he personally owned.

In 1598 Yale made extensive purchases of land from the Erddigs of Erthig, selling some but keeping Plas Grono as the new Yale family family seat.[4] “He certainly purchased some lands in Erddig as early as September 20, 1598, as on that date he empowered "Robert Lloyd, gent., as his attorney, to take possession of lands in Erddig, purchased by him from John Erthig and William Erthig, gentlemen of Erddig," Also about the same time he was purchasing Messuages and lands, or leases of leasehold property, in the adjoining townships of Esclusham and Sontley. The Erddig House estate consisted of about 254 English statute acres. According to "Norden's Survey" of 1620, Mr. Richard Davies purchased Erddig from Dr. Yale in the year 1619.”[1]

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The painting above of Plas Grono was done just before it was torn down in 1876.

From Rodney Horace Yale[1]: “It was a commodious residence, of sufficient dimensions to accommodate a family of twenty, with rooms to spare; there was an excellent walled-in fruit garden, an ample lawn, a dove cot and sufficient stabling. The tax returns for 1670 state it contained eight hearths. It passed from the Yale family when in 1728 it was sold by the heirs of Governor Elihu Yale. On the 17th or 18th of December 1731.”

A later owner, Mr. Thomas Apperley, described the house with affection: "I have never seen such noble sycamore and horse-chestnut trees, as those which sheltered Plas Gronow from the fury of the south western blast direct from the Welsh hills; nor tasted such fine fruit as its garden produced, nor drunk such cream, nor tasted such butter." He writes also of the surroundings of this old home: of the pretty cottages covered with honeysuckles, of the lovely lanes, of the noble woods of Erddig and of the tall and beautiful tower of Wrexham Church, seen two miles away.”[1]

Although Dr. David Yale owned the Erddig property until 1619, it was not until 1680 that the impressive Erddig Hall was built. Dr. Yale is often incorrectly stated as owning or living in this estate, which is now a British National Trust property. “On October 9, 1615 Dr. David Yale conveyed to Richard Davies, Vintner of London, his right in a leasehold property in Sontley and September 15, 1619, he together with his wife Frances, and eldest son and heir apparent, Thomas Yale, sold for £2300 to the same Richard Davies, his Erddig estate; the same containing, four messuages, a dovehouse, 150 acres of (arable) land, eighty of meadow, a hundred of pasture, twenty wood, twenty heath and bruery, and twenty of moor, "in Erthick and Esclusham.”

Erddig Hall

Dr. Yale also was in possession, by lease, of Glyn Park, which was English Crown land. The park, generally speaking, took in the whole valley of the Clywedog, from a point near "Erddig Fechan" to the King's Mills on the Ellesmere Road. He purchased the lease of part of the park, from Peter Warburton Esq., in the year 1606, and also secured otherwise a lease of nearly all the remainder; for it is stated that on October 9, 1615, he was "seized for years yet enduring of 'One Parke commonly called Glyn Parke, also Parke Coed-y-Glyn,' in the parishes of Wrexham and Marchwiel, which said park had long since been disparked and turned to arable land, meadow and pasture, and wherein were divers messuages and tenements, and two 'corn milnes.’ Park

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Coed-y-Glyn included part of Erddig township and adjoined the rest of it. There is a map of Glyn Park at Erddig Hall, drawn up in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, on which the estimated area is given as 697 statute acres."[1]

As Chancellor of Chester, David Yale presided as judge over many legal proceedings, usually involving religious infractions. The *Records of Early English Drama*[6] have details of many of these proceedings. For example:

> *1611 – Chester Diocesan Visitation Proceedings*
> *Held for Middlewich deanery before David Yale, LL.D.*
> *Contra Radulphum Holland*
> *For keeping a disorderly house and profaning the Sabbath day with dancing, piping, drunkenness and such lewd exercises presented heretofore not punished…"*[6]

The Yale Coat of Arms has been marshalled (merged) with another in this image, taken from a monument to Hugh Yale and wife Dorothy (Royden) in the St. Oswald's Church in Oswestry, dated 1616. This may be the earliest known depiction showing the Desmond-style coat of arms with a Boar on the crest. See *Yale Family Coat of Arms* for more details.

End of Life

David Yale died in Chester in 1626, leaving chattels valued at £692, and was buried in Chester Cathedral.[7] His will is currently available in Chester in the city library historical archives. William A. Yale, the author's uncle, had the will translated to English in 1977. At nearly 400 years old, the will is the oldest existing document from an ancestor. Dr. David Yale was a wealthy and prolific man as there are many children and relatives that were the subject of bequests. The document includes a bequest to: "David Yale, Thomas Yale, and Anne Yale - children of Thomas Yale my eldest sonne late Deceased twentie pounds a piece in toto threescore pounds." Dr. David Yale thus outlived his oldest son Thomas Yale, who was last in the American line of descent to live in Wales.

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Research Notes

Online Genealogy References:
WikiTree ID: Yale-74
FamilySearch ID: KJ5Z-ZWK
Wikipedia: David Yale (Chancellor)
Find a Grave Memorial: 148793135

Further Reading:
- Yale, Max Brian. *Guide to the Max Brian Yale Genealogical Collection*. *Max Brian Yale Genealogical Collection.* 2025
- Yale, Max Brian. *Yale Family Coat of Arms* - Origin and History. *Max Brian Yale Genealogical Collection*, 2025

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